

I Believe

I believe in steep drop-offs, the thunderstorm across the lake
in 1949, cold winds, empty swimming pools,
the overgrown path to the creek, raw garlic,
used tires, taverns, saloons, bars, gallons of red wine,
abandoned farmhouses, stunted lilac groves,
gravel roads that end, brush piles, thickets, girls
who haven't quite gone totally wild, river eddies,
leaky wooden boats, the smell of used engine oil,
turbulent rivers, lakes without cottages lost in the woods,
the primrose growing out of a cow skull, the thousands
of birds I've talked to all of my life, the dogs
that talked back, the Chihuahuan ravens that follow
me on long walks. The rattler escaping the cold hose,
the fluttering unknown gods that I nearly see
from the left corner of my blind eye, struggling
to stay alive in a world that grinds them underfoot.

Jim Harrison